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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE  
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INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2230  
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2350  
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0880  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1627  
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1983  
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2404  
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4836  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK  
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1499  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000741

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR G. GARLAND  
DRL FOR N. WILETT  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS  
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/08/2018  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#)  
SUBJECT: MDC TAKES LEAD ROLE IN PARLIAMENT, EVEN AS 5 MPS  
ARRESTED

REF: A. A. HARARE 622  
[1](#)B. B. HARARE 621

Classified By: Ambassador James McGee for reason 1.4(d).

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MDC Defiant as Mugabe Convenes Parliament  
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[1](#)1. (C) President Robert Mugabe convened Parliament today. The MDC, which had earlier indicated it would not attend in order to avoid recognition of Mugabe, was in attendance. The decision came after a heated discussion. According to Nelson Chamisa, MDC spokesperson, the MDC ultimately concluded that since it had won the election for speaker, it had more right than Mugabe to be present in Parliament.

[1](#)2. (SBU) The convening of Parliament was broadcast on Zimbabwean television. MDC parliamentary members arrived early and took seats on the side historically occupied by ZANU-PF as the majority party. When Mugabe arrived, ZANU-PF members stood; MDC members remained seated. In his 30-minute speech, Mugabe, as is his custom, lambasted the West and blamed sanctions for Zimbabwe's economic predicament. He ironically accused the West of using food as a tool for regime change. He also promised Zimbabwe would import necessary foodstuffs and would undertake a farm mechanization program to improve Zimbabwe's agricultural production.

[1](#)4. (SBU) In what one veteran Zimbabwean reporter told us was an unprecedented spectacle, MDC MPs jeered Mugabe throughout his speech, sang songs, and otherwise attempted to drown him out. At times, he appeared rattled. As he left the chamber, ZANU-PF MPs again stood while MDC MPs remained seated.

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MPs arrested after being on the run  
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[1](#)5. (SBU) At least five MDC MPs were arrested today and

yesterday. Two had been arrested previously; the three new arrests bring the total of MDC MPs arrested since May 1 to thirteen. These are also the first MDC MP arrests since the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on July 21 (reftel B). At the time the MOU was signed, it was believed that the "wanted" list had been suspended to allow political space for the talks.

16. (SBU) Only one MP (Elijah Jembere) was prevented from being sworn in and casting his vote for Speaker of the House of Assembly yesterday. All of the arrested MPs had been either listed as wanted or were re-arrested for old charges (reftel A). The August 26 edition of The Herald indicated that police are looking for eight MDC-T officials: Pearson Mungofa (Highfield East), Broadwin Nyawude (Bindura South), Edmore Marima (Bikita East), Elton Mangoma (Makoni North), Mathias Mlambo (Chipinge East), and Peter Takaringofa (Ward 11 councilor for Bikita East). Trevor Saruwaka, one of those arrested today, was not listed in The Herald as wanted. Four of those listed in The Herald have not -- yet -- been arrested.

The details of the most recent incidents of confirmed MP arrests are as follows:

Shuwa Mudiwa, MP from Mutare West  
First arrested: June 18, 2008  
Charges: Kidnapping a 13-year-old girl. Police allege he kidnapped the girl on June 7 and locked her in a house; the girl escaped and reported it to police. Mudiwa is a former

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ZANU-PF member and Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) operative who defected to the MDC.  
Released: Date uncertain  
Re-arrested: August 25, as he was en-route to parliament. He was held for several hours and then released. He made it back to Parliament in time to be sworn in and to vote.  
Charges: Same as above.

Elijah Jembere, MP from Epworth. (previously on the "wanted" list)  
Charges: Rape. The charges were initially thrown out by a Harare court, but the Zimbabwean Government appealed and put him on a wanted list on the same charges. According to the August 26 The Herald, Jembere is charged with raping the wife of an MDC-T councilor. The article further states that he was supposed to appear in court on May 27 to face these charges, but failed to appear, and a warrant for his arrest was subsequently issued.  
Arrested: August 25, 2008. As of August 26, police have not divulged his location to his lawyer.

Broadwin Nyawude, MP from Bindura South (previously on the "wanted" list)  
Charges: Inciting political violence  
Arrested: August 26, 2008. His lawyer has had access to him, but police report that he will be moved from Harare Central to his home constituency, where the charges arose.

Mathias Mlambo, MP from Chipinge North (previously on the "wanted" list)  
Charges: Inciting political violence  
Arrested: August 26, 2008. His lawyer has had access to him, but police report that he will be moved from Harare Central to his home constituency, where the charges arose.

Trevor Saruwaka, MP from Mutasa Central  
Arrested: May 11, 2008  
Charges: Inciting violence. Saruwaka had gone to Penhalonga Police Station to look for an MDC youth abducted by war veterans. He was ordered arrested at the police station  
Awarded bail: May 14, 2008  
Released from jail: May 20, 2008  
Re-arrested: August 26, 2008. His lawyer has had access to him, but police report that he will be moved from Harare

Central to his home constituency, where the charges arose.  
Charges: Inciting political violence. (NOTE: It is unclear  
if these are new charges. END NOTE.)

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COMMENT  
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17. (C) Mugabe has been shocked and humiliated twice in two days: First by the MDC's success in electing a parliamentary speaker--the first time in Zimbabwe's history that ZANU-PF has not controlled the speakership--and second by the disrespect shown him in Parliament today. It's still unclear how ZANU-PF will react to these events beyond the arrest of a handful of MDC MPs. While we still believe Mugabe is in control of ZANU-PF, the last two days have demonstrated significant weakness on Mugabe's part that may well exacerbate fissures in the party which were covered up in a united effort to win the June election.

18. (C) As for MDC Tsvangirai, it has become emboldened by its victory as evidenced by its behavior in Parliament today. It must be careful, however, not to overplay its hand; Mugabe has a well-deserved reputation for irrationally lashing out when he feels cornered or humiliated. What is important is a well-thought out and deliberate strategy to

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use its new parliamentary strength in negotiations to achieve power. END COMMENT.  
MCGEE